



The Kings Journal

September Issue • The New Voices

Welcome to the September edition of The Kings Journal! This month, our second edition proudly presents the new voices of Kings of Wessex - ready to shape a school where everyone feels they belong and can achieve their very best.



Photo by Cynara Weavell

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We have now completed our first month back at school, and it has been a time of adjustment, new routines, and fresh opportunities. The start of the year has brought the challenge of getting used to early mornings and a full timetable once again, but it has also brought the excitement of reuniting with friends, meeting new teachers, and beginning new topics across all subjects. For many, the return has meant rediscovering familiar classrooms and familiar faces, while also embracing new learning spaces, new teachers, and new ways of working. September has passed quickly, but it has already set the tone for the year ahead.

It has reminded us of the balance that school life requires – between the hard work of lessons and homework, and the enjoyment of social time, clubs, and activities outside the classroom. There has been a sense of energy and purpose around the school, as students settle into their routines and take on challenges, whether in the classroom, on the sports field, or in creative projects. The first month has also been a chance to reflect on personal goals and to begin building good habits that will carry us through the rest of the year.

Looking back, it is clear that September has been more than just a return to school; it has been a period of growth, adaptation, and renewed motivation. It has reminded us that while starting a new school year can feel overwhelming at times, it also brings countless opportunities to learn, make friends, and discover new passions. As we move forward, we can take the energy and enthusiasm of this first month and use it to make the rest of the year both successful and enjoyable.

A Vision of Belonging: An Interview with Our New Headteacher

This week, I had the opportunity to sit down with our new Headteacher, Mrs Cowper, to discuss her vision for the **future** of our school, her journey into leadership, and the values that guide her. Her responses were filled with **warmth, ambition, and a clear focus on students' wellbeing and success.**

When asked about her vision for the next five years, she explained that everything centres around the idea of **belonging**. "It is integral that every student feels they can be **successful, cared about, and able to be themselves,**" she said. From pastoral care to the curriculum, extracurricular activities, and trips, her goal is to create an environment where all students can **thrive and flourish.**

She described her leadership style as **approachable, fair, and engaging**, with the hope that staff and students alike will mirror those qualities. She is particularly excited to see the curriculum grow, with ideas such as whole-school productions and new opportunities for student leadership roles.

When asked how she will be different from the last Head, she acknowledged the work already done in **strengthening** the school but stressed that her focus will be on **inclusivity** and making sure attendance improves because students want to come to school. Among her **creative** ideas were animals, gardens, and even a car for students to work on—providing hands-on, **practical** opportunities alongside academic learning.

The Headteacher also revealed some **fun** surprises about her past: she is a trained drama teacher and dancer, with **experience** in musical theatre and commercial dance. She even once worked as a holiday park bear mascot—**giving** out hugs and making memories for children on holiday.

Her message to aspiring leaders is **encouraging**: "Do it. Don't doubt. Nobody is a finished product—everybody is learning how to be better. Give it a go."

For the new academic year, her advice was **simple but powerful**: "Look after each other and yourself, and always try your best." She spoke **passionately** about enjoying those "eureka moments" with young people—the times when students break through their self-doubt and realise they can **achieve.**

She wants everyone to leave school with **leadership skills, communication abilities, and the confidence to innovate and work in teams.** From achievement badges to student-led initiatives, she hopes students will take **pride** in shaping the school **community** and even grow into **leaders** "better than the ones we have today."

Her **motivation** for taking on the role was clear: she already knew and **valued** the students and families, having worked in both feeder schools. She wanted to see those students through their whole journey and **contribute** the experience and care she has to offer.

Reflecting on the challenges ahead, she pointed to **resilience** as the biggest hurdle, especially after the disruptions caused by COVID. She wants to help students replace self-doubt with **determination**: "Yes I can, and yes I will."
"If students leave here knowing they were **cared for and encouraged to become the best version of themselves,**" she said, "then that's the legacy I'd like to leave behind."

Above all, she wants the **community** to know how **welcomed** she has felt already, and how important it is that we continue to look after each other. "Thank you," she added sincerely. It's clear from her words that our Headteacher's **leadership** will focus on **belonging, opportunity, and growth.** With her at the helm, the future of our school looks both **exciting** and full of possibility.

Leading the Way: An Interview with Our Head Girl and Head Boy

This year, our Head Girl, Anna Banks, and Head Boy, Ed Coles, have set out clear goals for their time in leadership, while also reflecting on what they want their legacy to be and how they hope to inspire younger students.

What will your legacy be?

For Ed, it's about streamlining systems for future years so everything runs smoothly. Anna, on the other hand, has her eyes on a major goal: achieving the Gold Award for Rights Respecting Schools.

Will students get more of a voice in shaping school life?

Both leaders are passionate about this. Ed hopes to push house captains to become better known, while Anna suggested introducing more online voting systems to give students a greater say.

What would you say to those who want to be leaders in the future?

"Make yourself known and be confident," said Ed. Anna encouraged students to seize every opportunity, get involved early, and not be afraid to speak your views.

What do you enjoy about working with young people?

Anna enjoys being part of a team and producing great things together, while Ed values being part of a community.

What would surprise people about you?

Ed admitted to being something of a coffee connoisseur, while Anna revealed she is also a swimming teacher.

What will you do differently?

Anna is keen to boost enthusiasm in the younger years towards the Senior Team, helping them feel included and inspired to get involved. Ed, meanwhile, hopes to make the Senior Team more visible across the school—spreading the word about what they do and how they can support students.

If you could change one thing about school life, what would it be?

Anna would like to see a smart-casual dress code introduced for Sixth Form, while Ed suggested a better connection between Upper and Lower School.

What advice would you give for the New Year?

Ed emphasised the importance of meeting deadlines, while Anna encouraged students to stay organised and enjoy their lessons.

What inspired you to take on your role?

Both leaders drew inspiration from their families. Ed spoke about his dad, who has given so much to the school, while Anna credited her mum, who is "driven and focused," as her role model.

How would your friends describe you?

This time, they chose to answer for each other. Anna described Ed as hardworking, driven and fun, while Ed described Anna as driven, easy to get along with, and reliable.

Anna and Ed clearly bring their own strengths, ambitions, and personalities to their roles, but what unites them is their drive to make a real difference for students across the school. Their advice, ideas, and energy show exactly why they were chosen to lead.

Back to School: A Blessing for the Year Ahead



This September, Kings of Wessex students began the new academic year with a special back-to-school church service held at St. Andrew's Church in Cheddar. To ensure every student could participate meaningfully, each house attended the service on a different day, creating a more personal and reflective experience for all.

We were warmly welcomed by our school chaplain, Ruth, and the vicar, who opened the service with a thoughtful message about "the new year and the new you." Their words encouraged students to embrace fresh starts, set positive intentions, and approach the year ahead with confidence and optimism.

Music played an important part in the service, helping to bring everyone together. We sang the uplifting song *Create In Me a Clean Heart*, clapping along and joining in with energy and enthusiasm. The atmosphere was joyful and inclusive, reminding us all of the power of community and shared experiences.

Following the music, our new Headteacher, Mrs. Cowper, addressed the students. She read a passage reflecting on our school motto, *Believe and Succeed*, inspiring everyone to focus on their goals and embrace the challenges of the year with determination and positivity. Her words resonated with many, reinforcing the importance of believing in ourselves and supporting one another throughout the year.

The service concluded with a time of prayer, during which students reflected quietly on their hopes and aspirations for the year ahead. The chaplain and vicar then offered a blessing for all students, leaving everyone feeling encouraged, supported, and ready to start the term with renewed energy.

Overall, the back-to-school church service was more than just a tradition—it was a moment to pause, reflect, and set the tone for the year. It reminded students of the values that guide Kings of Wessex, the strength of our school community, and the importance of approaching the year with a positive mindset. With such a welcoming and inspiring start, the year ahead promises to be one full of growth, learning, and success for all.

Simple Strategies for Better Studying

Exams, essays, and homework can pile up quickly, and sometimes it feels like there just aren't enough hours in the day. The good news? A few clever techniques can make your study sessions more focused, less stressful, and far more effective.

The Cornell Notes Method

Instead of filling pages with scattered notes, try the Cornell Notes system. Divide your page into three sections:

- Notes (right-hand side): Key points from the lesson.
- Cues (left-hand side): Questions or keywords to test yourself later.
- Summary (bottom): A short recap in your own words.
- This method helps you process information twice — when writing and when reviewing — so you remember more.

The diagram illustrates the Cornell Notes layout. It features a large rectangular box divided into three sections. At the top right, there is a small box labeled '00/00/00'. Below this, the main area is split into two columns: 'Cues:' on the left and 'Notes:' on the right. At the bottom, there is a wide box labeled 'Summary:'.

Active Recall

Instead of just re-reading, test yourself. Cover your notes and try to explain the topic, or quiz yourself with flashcards. This builds stronger memory links than passive reading ever will.

The Pomodoro Technique

If your concentration fades after a while, break your study time into 25-minute sessions, followed by a 5-minute break. After four sessions, take a longer rest. Short bursts of focus are easier to sustain than marathon sessions.

Create the Right Environment

Small changes make a big difference. A clear desk, good lighting, and keeping your phone out of reach can all improve focus. If possible, use the same spot just for studying — it helps your brain switch into "work mode."

Spaced Repetition

Review topics several times over increasing gaps — for example, the next day, three days later, and a week later. This spacing strengthens long-term memory and reduces last-minute cramming stress.

Studying well isn't about the number of hours you put in — it's about how you use them. Try experimenting with these methods and see which combination helps you feel more confident and in control of your learning.

What's On This Term

The school calendar this term is brimming with a wide range of exciting opportunities, ensuring that there is something to engage and inspire every year group. From academic workshops and creative clubs to sporting events and special assemblies, the upcoming weeks promise a variety of experiences designed to enrich student life, spark new interests, and bring the whole school community together.

Here's a closer look at what's coming up:

Focus Day

Students will step away from their usual timetable and spend the day with tutors, focusing on how to learn effectively. This special day is designed to build study skills, revision techniques, and strategies that will support success across all subjects.

Year 11 Geography Trip

Year 11 Geographers will be visiting Bristol as part of their Human Geography studies. Bristol is a key case study city, and the trip will give students first-hand experience of the themes they have been exploring in class, from urban regeneration to the challenges of city life.

Careers Fair

Our annual Careers Fair will bring a wide variety of companies and organisations into school, each with its own stand. Students will be able to ask questions, explore future pathways, and even collect some free merchandise along the way.

Sixth Form Opportunities

- ♦ Kings Sixth Form Open Evening: A chance for students and parents to learn more about the opportunities and subjects available.
- ♦ Sixth Form Taster Day: Year 11s can try out different subjects, meet teachers, and experience what sixth form life is like.
- ♦ Applications Open: Sixth Form applications will officially open in October, giving students plenty of time to consider their next steps.

With so many events on the horizon, there are plenty of chances to learn, explore, and prepare for the future. Whether it's discovering a new passion, developing important skills, or connecting with fellow students, there's something for everyone to get involved in.

Sporting Life at School

Sport is an important part of life at school, and there are plenty of opportunities for students to get involved outside of lessons. Both lunchtime and after-school activities give everyone a chance to enjoy being active, spend time with friends, and try out different games in a fun environment.

At lunchtime, **Badminton** brings something a little different. It's fast, light-hearted, and easy to pick up, which makes it a great way to recharge in the middle of the day. The short matches and quick rallies mean that everyone can get involved, whether they're looking for a competitive game or just a casual hit-about with friends.

After school, the programme shifts towards bigger team sports. **Netball** and **Rugby** are always lively sessions, with students working together, learning tactics, and enjoying the fast pace of the game. The buzz of competition creates a great atmosphere, whether on the court or out on the pitch, and it's a chance for players to show off their skills while still having fun.

Midweek, **Hockey** adds something different again. It's a sport that demands quick movement, sharp passing, and plenty of teamwork. With its speed and intensity, it brings a real sense of challenge and excitement, and it has become a popular choice for many students.

To finish the week, **Football** remains a firm favourite. It always draws a crowd, with players throwing themselves into matches that are full of energy, skill, and enthusiasm. It's a chance not only to enjoy one of the world's most loved sports, but also to share in the camaraderie that comes with playing as part of a team.

Altogether, the mix of lunchtime and after-school sessions means there's something for everyone. Whatever the game, the most important part is the enjoyment, the friendships made, and the sense of belonging that comes from being part of school sport.

Time	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
Lunch 1:30 - 2:10				Badminton	
After School 3:15 - 4:15		Netball Rugby	Hockey		Football

The Back-to-School Poem

The poem September Bells reflects on the first month back at school after the summer holidays. It presents a mix of emotions, from the excitement of reuniting with friends to the pressure of returning to routine and study. The imagery of sounds, smells, and time passing helps to convey the contrast between the freedom of summer and the structure of school life. Ultimately, the poem suggests that although the transition may feel challenging, it also carries a sense of renewal and possibility.

September Bells

The corridors wake with a restless hum,
laughter and footsteps tangled as one,
new shoes squeak against polished floors,
old friends rush through swinging doors.

September smells of ink and rain,
of crisp notebooks, pages unstained.

Timetables fold like maps of fate,
lessons begin, the clock won't wait.

Teachers' voices, steady, clear,
pull us back from the lazy year—
summer's glow fades into grey,
yet hope sparks in the work we lay.

A month has passed, the rhythm's found:
early alarms, the playground's sound,
the thrill of starts, the weight of rule—
life resets inside the school.

Thank you for reading the September 2025 edition of The Kings Journal.
Celebrating the passion and dedication that define The Kings of Wessex
Academy.

A new year, new goals, and new opportunities ahead.

Edited and designed by Cynara Weavell. With thanks to the
students and staff who contributed.

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